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Edited by

Professor Augustine Osa Enofe

Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences
University of Benin, Benin City

Professor Ofuan James Ilaboya

Director, University of Benin Consultancy Services Unit, &
Vice President, The Academy of Management Nigeria

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Integrated Marketing Communication: A Sustainable Tool for Patronage in the Nigerian Telecommunication Industry

Dr. Egun .O. Imouokhome

*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Ilorin, P.M.B. 1515 Ilorin, Kwara State.
Telephone: 08038002596
Email: imouokhome.eo@unilorin.edu.ng*

&

Dr. Mulikat Abdulraheem

*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Ilorin, P.M.B. 1515 Ilorin, Kwara State.
Telephone: 08038002596
Email: mailmulik@gmail.com*

Abstract

The study examines integrated marketing communication as a sustainable tool for enhancing customer patronage in the telecommunication industry, using MTN service providers in Ilorin South, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria as the study area. The population of the study comprises the subscribers of MTN service in Ilorin South. The study employed the use of primary data through a self-administered and retrieved questionnaire. Cochran's formula for the determination of sample size was adopted for the study to arrive at a sample size of 384 respondents. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data gathered and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significant level.

The results of the hypotheses tested reveal that integrated marketing communication elements that were used have a significant effect on sustainable patronage ($\beta = 0.447, 0.151, \text{ and } 0.167$ for advertising, personal selling, and sales promotion respectively, with an overall significance of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 alpha level). This connotes that better use of the integrated marketing communication element will aid sustainable patronage in the telecommunication industry. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant effect of integrated marketing communication elements on sustainable patronage in the Nigeria telecommunication industry.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Nigerian telecommunication industry should not relent in its continuous use of integrated marketing communication elements to enhance a sustainable patronage of their service in this era of toxic competition.

Keywords: Telecommunication industry, Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Customer Patronage.

Introduction

In this competitive era, several businesses are looking for various avenues to outperform their competitors in the business world, as so many brands are competing to gain market share making promotion to become a more significant tool in reaching target customers. Even the

telecommunication industry is not left out in their process of sourcing for subscribers by the reason of the competitive syndrome.

It is not just enough to produce good quality products and think they will sell themselves; these products must be communicated in a way to create awareness and stimulates a sustainable patronage in the potential consumers or the consumers of the products. Any organization without a sustainable tool that will enhance the patronage and even continuous patronage of their product may soon fade away from the business world. Therefore, the key actors in the industry are all struggling to sustain their business places with its attendant scramble in the bid to increase their market shares.

However, the deregulation and liberalization of the Nigerian telecommunication market have called for intense competition in the sector. Therefore, customers should be offered sophisticated products and services to keep the firm at the heart of subscribers. Products and services should not only be provided to consumers, rather information about such products and service offerings should be effectively communicated to the consumers. To this end, effective use of integrated marketing communication elements such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling will help telecommunication service providers to provide customers with a better understanding of how well the products and services will best serve their purpose.

Also, since the last decade, the integrated marketing communications (IMC) concept has increasingly gained momentum and is been largely regarded as the key differentiating factor between successful companies that control large market shares and those that don't. Intensive competition is urging companies to look for new and innovative ways not only to gain market share as has been the case but to retain what they already have. IMC has therefore recently played a very pivotal role in marketing management issues, and is ranked as a top pillar in developing a company's marketing strategy. Effective strategies focus on the successful development of integration of marketing communications tools (e.g. advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, and personnel selling) to optimize the communications impact on target consumers (Kotler, 2006).

Integrated marketing is a strategy whereby companies deliver a unified, holistic message across all marketing channels at their disposal to achieve communication consistency and maximum communication impact on the target audience capable of ensuring the realization of organizational communication objectives (Šerić, Gil-Saura & Ozretić-Došen, 2015). It is the integration, coordination, and utilization of promotional mix elements and other marketing strategies by companies to disseminate coherent, consistent, harmonized, and synchronized information to their target audiences to promote brand image, customer patronage, sales, and marketing performance.

The telecommunication industry has, however, drowned the minds of potential and actual subscribers of their services with tricks to retain them to keep patronizing their services and preventing them from defecting to competitors. Theories on communication and customer retention have been developed to explain how an integrated marketing communication approach has reduced the rate of defection among customers. Reichheld, (1990) affirms that customer retention, increases customer net present value by over 25%, integrated marketing communication tools are used to communicate to customers (actual and potential) about a firm offerings through several strategic media platforms to acquire, grow and retain them in value over time.

The telecommunication industry in Nigeria is faced with very intense competition with MTN as one of the major players in the industry. They design offers and promote various types of services and incentives to different market segments. This has triggered the rate of customer switching action. Customers' defection is a clear manifestation of mobile telephone subscribers in Nigeria. (Aminu and Iartini 2008), Customer retention has become successful to a large extent due to the application of integrated marketing communication programs in Nigeria.

Therefore, it is in light of the above that the researcher is looking into integrated marketing communication: a tool for sustainable patronage in the Nigeria Telecommunication Industry.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, network subscribers in Nigeria have seriously been switching from one provider to the other in the form of defecting. According to Reicheld (1990), brand defection accounts for over 25 percent of the net present value to the receiving companies and 85 percent loss of revenue to releasing companies. The major reason for this switching is not farfetched from the issue or poor quality of service in conjunction with the discrepancies in the use of integrated marketing communication tools to communicate product offerings to their customers.

Integrated marketing communication requires a lot of effort, but it delivers many benefits to organizations. Integrated marketing communication is very important as it creates a competitive advantage, and boosts sales and profits through sustainable patronage stimulation while saving money, time, and stress even though its running cost is high.

However, considering the cost, some organizations like to shy away from combining the use of the elements in integrated marketing communication to communicate their products to their potential consumers hence losing the benefits associated with the integration.

Again, several studies such as Shamout (2016); Egwuonwu, Adeniran, and Egwuonwu (2017); Bhatti (2018); Tibebe and Ayenew (2018); Ezenyilimba, Mbah, and Eze (2019); among others have conducted research on promotional mix and customer patronage. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a dearth of research on the promotional mix and customer patronage among telecom subscribers in Kwara State, Nigeria. This gap is been filled by this study by examining the impact of integrated marketing communication on patronage.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of integrated marketing communication tools on the sustainable patronage of MTN services in Nigeria

Hypothesis

There is no significant impact of integrated marketing communication on sustainable patronage of MTN services in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study will cover the MTN Nigeria subscribers in Ilorin South Local Government Area in Kwara state. This local government area is preferred because of its proximity to the researcher and the population consists of a mixed group of both the educated ones and the

non-educated ones, even though more dominated by the elites. Also, the variables of the study will be limited to, independent (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing) while the dependent variable is customer patronage.

The Significance of the Study

This study will help policymakers in the industry to know the integrated marketing communication elements that woo their subscriber most and know how to determine their advertising budget to encourage more patronage of their services.

Also to the society at large, when patronage is been sustained, sales will increase and profit will shoot up, hence, there will be room for expansion which will lead to the creation of employment and improvement in the economy of the nation.

It will also serve as a reference point for further research work.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

According to Al-Qeedaa (2019), integrated marketing is an approach to marketing communication that harnesses the individual potential of all promotional tools in a firm's promotional mix in concert with any other marketing strategy to maximize the chances of realizing the promotional objectives of the firm. Instead of developing separate messages, contents, and appeals for each promotional tool as would be obtained in the traditional form of communication; an integrated marketing strategy develops a unified, consolidated, and coherent promotional campaign that is executed across all the promotional channels at a firm's disposal simultaneously such that the target audience obtains a unified message without equivocation or ambiguity. This builds customers' trust, prevents customers' confusion, and unequivocally delivers a firm's messages to the target audience thereby maximizing the probability of eliciting desired responses from consumers.

There is growing evidence that IMC results in a strong positive impact on brand and financial performance (Luxton et al., 2015; Porcu, et al. 2017). IMC according to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM, 2012), is defined as a strategic approach to management of marketing communications activities in an organization. Lamb et al (2012) also argue that IMC is the systematic coordination of all sales programs, primarily in media, advertising, promotion of sales and personal selling, and public relations as well as other forms of communications. Porcu et al. (2012) on the other hand, define it as a concept that directs and coordinates the process of planning, implementing, and supervising brand messages by which brand-customer relationship is built.

In today's turbulent world, Eagle et al (2015) see integrated promotion mix as essential. Using expert promotional integration, companies invest in corporate image advertising to increase brand awareness through a single advertisement slot. Keller (2016) identified the challenges facing customers as a result of the ever-growing choice of brand contact points and suggested further customer/agency relationships

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is how firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the product and brand that they sell (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In the process of informing, persuading, and reminding customers of their products, the customers will be stimulated in a way to keep making continuous patronage of the product and then reach a level of loyalty.

According to (Cheruiyot & Peter, 2016) integrated marketing communication is a strategy for coordinating, unifying, and bringing together all of a manufacturer's or service organization's communication messages, programs, and vehicles that impact customers or prospects. Integrated marketing communication performs many functions for consumers. Consumers can be told or shown why and how a service is used, by what kind of person, and where and when consumer can learn about who the service providers are, what the company name stands for and consumer can be given an incentive or reward for patronage (Stanly & Jobber, 2008). Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is concerned with the coordination of marketing and promotional tools that effectively and consistently communicate with its target markets (Esu, 2012).

Marketing has shifted its focus away from mass marketing to targeted marketing (Madie & Peirie, 2006). This is a departure from the traditional marketing approach, which advocated for the use of marketing mix and mass marketing to obtain market share dominance.

According to the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) integrated marketing communication is a marketing planning concept that recognizes the value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles and incorporates several communication mixes (such as; advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, and public relations) to give transparency, uniformity and maximum communications impact (Adoyi, 2021).

Advertising

Riley (2016) observes that advertising is any paid form of communication from an identified sponsor or source that draws attention to ideas, goods, services, or the sponsor itself. It is directed toward groups rather than individuals, and it is usually delivered through media such as television, radio, newspapers, and, increasingly Internet. As a popular promotional strategy, advertising has been confirmed to possess the capacity to improve brand awareness, customer patronage, sales volume, and overall performance of business organizations (Gbandi & Kadiri, 2015).

Sales Promotion

Over the years, sales promotion has proven to be an efficacious and efficient promotional tool for substantially and rapidly enhancing sales and overall marketing performance over the short term. Various sales promotional methods such as discounts, premiums, samples, bundles, bonus packs, and coupons have been applied by business organizations around the world to substantially increase customer patronage and sales performance (Abimbola, Abioro & Okeowo (2020).

Ofosu-Boateng (2020), posits that marketers use sales promotion tools to draw a stronger and quicker buyer response, including short-run effects such as highlighting product offers and boosting sales. Sales promotions are instruments that stimulate the sales of products and brands, especially in consumer-packaged goods. Sales promotions are short-term promotional offers to promote the selling or purchase of a product (Okyere, Agypong & Nyarku, 2011) including free presents, cash-off vouchers, product samples, and so on. According to Aliata et al. (2012), there is a statistically important linkage between promotion, sales, and performance. They confirm that the promotion of sales increased brand love, thus improving brand performance and high profitability. Nevertheless, research has not shown how sales promotion strategies can improve sales performance.

Public Relation

According to Ngwenya (2015), public relations have existed since the 20th century, and the main job is to inform, persuade, and integrate the public into early society. Mubushar *et al.* (2013) were of the view that an increasing number of organizations are using public relations to communicate with their audiences about the organization and brands. Public relations involves building good relations with the company's numerous publics by gaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling unfavorable rumors, stories, and events. It includes press releases, sponsorships, special events, and other forms (Belch and Belch, 2007; Kotler and Keller, 2012).

In the view of Stobber (2011), public relations are the management of communications and relationships to establish goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its public. Ebitu (2012) perceives public relations as a systematic effort by an organization to identify, create, promote, and sustain a favorable relationship, understanding, and goodwill capable of portraying the organization in a good light with its public.

Public relations strategies (such as community development, corporate philanthropy, media relations, customer relations, sponsorships, events, etcetera) have been used by companies to create and maintain a positive corporate image and to obtain the goodwill of the public, all of which facilitates the acceptance of their offerings by the target audience, hence effectively accelerating their marketing performance (Abu-Jamul, Mustapha & Hussein, 2018).

Personal Selling

Another element of the marketing communication mix (MCM) is personal selling, which is the personal presentation by the firm's sales force to make sales and build customer relationships (Porcu *et al.* 2012; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Rawal, 2013). According to Manisha (2012), personal selling is suitable for winning new customers, though it is equally suitable for delivering services to the expectations of existing customers.

Okyere *et al.* (2011) also argued that this two-way contact practice enables the seller to recognize and customize the sales presentation in light of this experience to identify the unique needs and challenges of the customers. It links the needs of the company to the wishes of its clients, hence completing the transaction is a personal obligation to sell (Kotler and Keller, 2012; Dmour *et al.*, 2013).

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is defined as direct connections with targeted individual customers to obtain both an immediate response and cultivate long-lasting customer relationships. It is often referred to as direct mail or as dialogue marketing, personal marketing, and database marketing (Bird, 1989; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). According to Sellahvarzi, Mirabi & Parizi, (2014), due to the rapid growth in both communications technology and the introduction of direct marketing, the overall nature of marketing communication changed.

Patronage

The sole purpose of every business is to "Create clients" (Drucker, 1973 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012). Ogwo and Igwe (2012) opined that the only economic and social justification for the existence of any business is to create customer satisfaction. The importance of the customer and customer patronage is so germane. It includes financial and non-financial dimensions. Various studies have been carried out on what influences or impacts on level of customer patronage. They include the firm's capability, product or service attributes,

economic situation, political forces, social and psychological factors, situational, competition, and marketing mix programs (Schiffman & Kanuk 2009 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012; Kotler and Keller 2006). Experience shows that defining and measuring patronage is a difficult task. Attitude and actual usage patronage have been used as measures of customer patronage (Ogwo & Igwe 2012). Dick and Basu (1994) precisely suggested that favorable attitude and repeat purchases were prerequisites to defining patronage. Intention to use is defined as a specific desire to continue a relationship with a service provider (Czepiel and Culmore, 1987 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012).

Theoretical Review

The study will be based on the AIDA Model and the Hierarchy of effect theory

AIDA Model

AIDA is one of the communication models used by companies to facilitate their product and service delivery. The model was an early attempt to explain how the potential audience of publicity could pass several steps and the main one was attention. It was developed in 1925 by Elie St. Elme Lewis who was a publicity and sales pioneer and thought it was effective if an ad contained the four qualities. Palmer (2005) assumes that the message is delivered in line with an easy model: promoting prospective attention; interest prospects for a product; prompt desire prospects, and action from the perspective.

The model suggests that customers react in cognitive, affective, and conative sequences to sales information. The sales officer first takes care of the salespeople, welcomes them, visits them, or promotes them through sales. Then, reliable marketing, display, or publicity created by this product by showing how the products can satisfy the desires of the customer. Finally, it is possible to use a single sales strategy to encourage purchases (Lamb et al, 2012).

The Hierarchy of Effects Theory (HET)

Brand awareness is defined as the extent to which a product or service can be recalled. If a person is unable to recall a product or service, he can't buy it. This argument is parallel to the premise of the Hierarchy of the Theory of Effects (HET). Lavidge & Steiner, founders of the brand HET, (1961), said buying a brand is the last of six steps in which customers decide to consume the brand.

The HET contends that being aware of the service or product is the foundation of a purchase. Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, and McDonald (2005) have opined that this kind of awareness might not necessarily be 'being aware of the specific service'. Rather, it could be as good as being aware of the service provider such as a bank, telecommunication industry, etc.

For the HET, "knowledge" of a product is of greater significance than "awareness" of that product. The reason is that knowing a product takes the individual closer to making a purchase; thus, knowledge of the product is associated with a deeper understanding of brand characteristics. It is based on this knowledge or understanding that the customer begins to 'like' the service or brand after gaining knowledge of it.

The HET is probably the most logical and important when 'preferences' come into play in its fourth stage. This stage describes the fact that customers compare the value of one brand to another because they understand the value of this brand. In a competitive situation, many more brands can be compared, and it is reasonable for the one known to give the best value to their customers.

The final stage of the HET before purchases are "conviction". At this stage, individuals demonstrate the desire to purchase the service or product. They do so either by expressing willingness to acquire it if need be or sampling it. Sampling the service enables the individual to verify its value as communicated by the firm.

The last phase of HET before purchase is 'conviction.' At this point, people show the will to purchase the service or product. Either through their willingness to acquire it or by sampling it, if necessary. Sampling the service enables the person to verify their value as reported by the company.

Purchases are the primary ways customers make brand quality perceptions. The HET explains that awareness is the beginning of the process in which customers make a purchase.

Empirical

Abimbola, Abioro, & Okeowo (2020) carried out a study on Promotional Mix and Customer Patronage: A Study of Telecom Subscribers in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing) on customer patronage among telecom subscribers in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. A survey research design was used for the study. Data was collected through the use of a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the respondents' biodata while multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The findings of the study revealed that advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing had significant effects on customers' choice of mobile telecommunication networks in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria.

Nkana and Dafiovo (2015) carried out a study on integrated marketing communications and consumer patronage of Etisalat products in Uyo, Nigeria. The research technique employed was the survey method, while the instruments for data collection were the questionnaire and interview schedule. A sample of 388 respondents was drawn from five different zones across Uyo metropolis out of the 81,546 subscribers. The cluster and purposive sampling methods were employed, while the Cronbach Alpha statistical tool was used to establish reliability with a coefficient of 0.73. Findings show that Etisalat Nigeria was fully involved in integrating the five major tools of Integrated Marketing Communications to create awareness and influence patronage of the network in Uyo. Results also indicate that subscribers of Etisalat Nigeria in Uyo are satisfied with the promotional activities of the network and rate it above those of competitors.

However, sales promotion and advertising influenced patronage most among the five tools under study. It was concluded that Etisalat Nigeria has influenced patronage of the network by integrating these marketing communications tools, though other factors such as recommendations from friends and family, and low tariffs also influenced patronage to an extent. Consequently, it was recommended that Etisalat Nigeria should continue with Integrated Marketing Communications with a special focus on sales promotions and advertising as well as investing in word-of-mouth advertisement. Moreover, promotional promises should be kept in full to encourage trust and by extension, loyalty in patronage among customers.

Enitilo, Ajayi, and Famuagun (2017) evaluated the effect of promotional activities on customer patronage of insurance firms in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design. The respondents comprised customers of ten

selected insurance firms that have business operating in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State. A stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the respondents' demography while inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis) was used to test the hypothesis formulated. Results of the study indicated that media advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and direct marketing have a significant effect on customer patronage of selected insurance firms in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

(Kehinde, 2009) carried out a study to investigate integrated marketing communication on consumer patronage of beverage products in Nigeria. The goal of the study was to see how IMC affects consumer patronage of Nigerian Beverage products. The study intended to determine the level of understanding and application of IMC by Nigerian Beverage communication institutions among other things. The research adopted a survey design and data for the study was obtained through a structured questionnaire. Correlation and Kruskalwallis one-way analysis were used to analyze the data. The finding showed that respondents valued the inherent advantage that the utilization of integrated marketing communication offers over the use of (the traditional method). Such benefit includes cost savings, effective and efficient marketing communication message, sustained long-term client-customer relationship better consumer patronage amongst others.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted the survey design method to enhance a comprehensive understanding of the active variables in the research work because the qualitative research design helps to report the situation exactly the way it is.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all MTN subscribers in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. This study area was chosen by the researcher for the reason of accessibility to the area coupled with the fact that they also have MTN offices around the area.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The population of customers of MTN services in the area of coverage is infinite; therefore, Cochran's (1977) formula for determining a large population sample size was employed in calculating the sample size. The formula is shown below;

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Given:

n_0 = sample size, Z = value of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails ($1 - \alpha$ equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95 percent), e = the desired level of precision, p = the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, and $q = 1 - p$.

Therefore, the customer's sample size for the study at 95 per cent confidence level and 1 per cent precision is symbolized by; $Z = 1.96$, $p = 0.5$ (maximum variability assumed since actual variability in the proportion is not known), $q = 0.5$, $e = 0.05$.
Therefore, the sample size for the customers become

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{3.8416(0.25)}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384 \text{ respondents (customers)}$$

Sample size= 384

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was employed to validate this study. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability with (0.70) as the benchmark; as recommended by (Nunnally, 1978) was calculated to ensure the reliability of the result after a pilot survey.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was used in collecting data from the selected respondents; the questionnaire was self-administered and retrieved to get a high and quick response from respondents and to be able to tackle any form of problem that may arise in the process of administering, filing, and retrieving the questionnaire. A self-designed questionnaire with items rated on a 5-point Likert scale of agreement extending from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, to strongly disagree, was used in generating data relating to the use of integrated marketing communication by MTN Nigeria(a determinant factor) and customer patronage(dependent variable).

Method of Data Analysis

Regression via the SPSS package was used in analyzing the data, and hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data gathered from the respondents were presented and analyzed and the hypothesis was tested at a 0.05significant level using regression analysis. The results were interpreted about the objectives of the research.

Hypothesis Testing

H0: There is no significant impact of integrated marketing communication on patronage

Table 1.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.596 ^a	.356	.349	.26646

a. Predictors: (Constant), Direct marketing, Personal selling, Advertising, Sales promotion

The model summary in Table 1.1 shows R to be (0.596)60% meaning there is a relationship between the dependent and the independent variables and R^2 is 0.356; meaning that 36% of customer patronage (dependent variable) is been influenced by the independent variables and the remaining 64% are caused by other variables that are not captured into the study.

Table 1.2 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.699	4	3.675	51.758	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.626	375	.071		
	Total	41.325	379			

- a. Dependent Variable: Customer patronage
b. Predictors: (Constant), Direct marketing, Personal selling, Advertising, Sales promotion

Table 1.2 shows the ANOVA result which reveals a significant p-value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.5. This implies that the model is fit.

Table 1'3 **Coefficients^a**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.368	.132		10.350	.000
Advertising	.476	.048	.447	9.937	.000
Personal selling	.223	.064	.151	3.492	.001
Sales promotion	.164	.048	.167	3.442	.001
Direct marketing	-.733	.069	-.505	-10.599	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer patronage

The coefficient table 1.3 reveals an overall significance of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.5 significant level. This implies that there is a significant effect of integrated marketing communication on customer patronage; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The individual significance level of 0.000, 0.001, 0.001; and 0.000 for advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing respectively coupled with the positive t values of 9.937, 3.492, 3.442 for advertising, personal selling, and sales promotion further buttressed the reason for the decision.

Again, the Beta value of .447, .151, .167 for advertising, personal selling, and sales promotion implies that an increase in advertising, personal selling, and promotion led to a 45%, 15%, and 17% increase in patronage respectively.

However, even though direct marketing has a significant effect on patronage, Table 1.3 reveals a negative t-value between direct marketing and patronage and also a negative beta value meaning an increase in this variable will hurt patronage.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the hypothesis was tested and Table 1.1 reveals $r^2 = 0.356$ meaning 36% of patronage is caused by the integrated marketing communication elements (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing). The ANOVA in Table 1.2 also revealed that the model is fit, and the overall significant value in Table 1.3 reveals a significant level of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05; this implies that there is a significant effect of integrated marketing communication elements (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing) on customer patronage. This is in line with Abimbola, Abioro, & Okeowo (2020), and Enitilo, Ajayi, and Famuagun (2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study assessed integrated marketing communication as a tool for sustainable patronage in the telecommunication industry. The study thus, reported on how advertising, personal

selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing can help in enhancing the sustainability of customer patronage. The result of the study therefore, reveals a significant effect of integrated marketing communication as a tool for sustainable patronage which implies that a positive change in integrated marketing communication elements will lead to a positive change in customer patronage and vice versa except in the case of direct marketing where there was an inverse relationship.

The study based on this conclusion thereby, recommends that the telecommunication industry, especially MTN the case study, should keep improving on how they engage the use of the integrated marketing communication element in influencing sustainable patronage for their product.

Also, the telecommunication industry should always engage in the use of integrated marketing communication tools continuously and not make it a once-in-a-blue-moon affair to aid the sustainability of their patronage.

However, for further research, it is recommended that other elements in integrated marketing communication be included to know how the total integration of such elements can aid sustainable patronage.

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